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TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Li-shih Yen-chiu /Historical Research/)

Page

A Brief Discourse on Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's Peasant Revolutionary Line - by Chung Chi-chou . . . . . 1

Li Hsiu-ch'eng--A Mirror of Revisionism and Capitulationists - by Chang Hai-p'eng . . . . . 20

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# A Brief Discourse on Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's Peasant Revolutionary Line

by

Chung Chi-chou (钟纪周)

(Li-shih Yen-chiu /Historical Research/, No. 1, February 20, 1976)

The T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo revolution, which shook the country and the world, broke out on the great earth of China from the 1850's to the 1860's. The T'ai-p'ing heroes, under the guidance of their leader Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's peasant revolutionary line, and holding high the anti-feudal, anti-aggression revolutionary banner, fought bravely and arduously over more than half of China for more than a decade and dealt stunning blows to foreign and domestic reactionaries. The revolution represented the culmination of China's old-type peasant wars as well as the first revolutionary high tide in modern China. To seriously sum up the historical experience of this peasant revolutionary line pushed by Hung Hsiu-ch'üan is of practical significance to studying the theory of proletarian dictatorship, persisting in Marxism, combating and preventing revisionism, and heightening our consciousness of carrying out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

## (1)

Speaking of the causes behind the outbreak of the T'ai-p'ing revolution, Marx pointed out: "It was undoubtedly England's cannon that started this big conflagration. With cannon England forced China to import the narcotic called opium." (Selected Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. II, pp. 1-2) The aggressive Opium War launched by England in 1840 caused China to sink into a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society, and the national catastrophe caused by foreign capitalist aggression further aggravated the class contradictions that were already very tense before the Opium War. On the one hand, taxes continued to increase, land-holdings became ever more concentrated, and political oppression and economic exploitation were further sharpened. "The people were impoverished and led an extremely hard life!"* The poor peasants, who were at the bottom layer of society, could no longer go on living in the way they did. On the other hand, defeat in the Opium War caused the Ch'ing Government to lose all its prestige. "The superstitious belief in the permanence of the empire governed by Heaven's mandate was struck a fatal blow." (Ibid., p. 2) This greatly boosted the courage and determination of the laboring people to rise up in struggle. The resistance and struggles by the masses of people rose like storms and spread like prairie fire. It was under this situation of daily sharpening class and national contradictions that Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, the great leader of peasant revolution, bearing the

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* The Wan Ta Hung Proclamation.

great ambition of saving the nation and the people, founded the revolutionary God Worshipping Society and started the revolutionary journey one year (1843) after the conclusion of the "Treaty of Nanking."

"In order to overthrow a political power, it is always necessary first of all to create public opinion, to do work in the ideological sphere." From the founding of the God Worshipping Society to the eve of the Chint'ien Uprising, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan and his close comrade-in-arms Feng Yün-shan and others travelled between poor villages and faraway places in Kwangtung and Kwangsi, going deep among the poor masses to mobilize them. At the same time, they continued to heed the revolutionary voices of the masses and sum up the experiences of mass struggle. In the 1845-48 period, Hung, proceeding from the idea of equality and equal distribution demanded by the peasants, transformed China's ancient idea of universal harmony and the idea of "equality" in the original doctrines of Western christianity, and successively wrote such documents on peasant revolution as "Song of Saving the World by the Original Truth," "Instructions on Enlightening the World by the Original Truth," "Instructions on Awakening the World by the Original Truth" and "Heaven and Sun of Peace." These laid the theoretical foundation for the T'ai-p'ing revolution and constituted the basic content of Hung's peasant revolutionary line.

The gist of Hung's peasant revolutionary line was the peasants' demand for equality. This was peasants' "spontaneous reaction to the extreme social inequality, the opposition between the rich and the poor, master and slave, those who live extravagantly and those who are starving." (Selected Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. III, p. 146) This was the most revolutionary idea of the peasants. In China, just as feudal oppression and exploitation were especially brutal, so the demand for equality was particularly strong and clearcut. Hung Hsiu-ch'üan inherited and promoted this revolutionary tradition and advocated equality between states, political and economic equality and equality between sexes. He strongly condemned that kind of unjust world which existed at that time when "people struggle against and slaughter each other" and "deception and fraud are practiced" and when "love and hatred are dictated by selfishness."* Moreover, aiming at the reactionary doctrine that "Heaven changes not, so the Way changes not" preached by the feudal ruling class, he pointed out that "when disorder is extreme, order will return, and darkness will be followed by light -- such is the way of heaven. When the night passes, the sun will rise."* In other words, it was justified for the oppressed to rebel, and the time had come for those who could suffer no more to make revolution. What was the goal of rebellion? Hung called for the substitution of the ideal "public" of peasants for the "private" of the exploiting class and the establishment of a "fair and equitable world"* without oppression and exploitation. He divided the oppressors and the oppressed into two opposing camps, the "righteous" and the

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* "Instructions on Enlightening the World by the Original Truth," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (I), pp. 91-92.

"evil." He put the revolutionary people on the side of the "righteous" and the feudal ruling class and its followers on the side of the "evil," the source of inequality. He wanted to "get rid of the evil and keep the righteous," to "capture all demons and devils." He called on the world's "brothers and sisters to jump out of the house of the evil," to be "the firm rock in the middle of the stream," to "turn the tide."* In other words, he wanted the people to rise up bravely in struggle to destroy the evil forces and to strive for their own liberation. As regards the slogans of struggle and the form of organization, Hung held that the slogan "oppose the Ch'ing and restore the Ming" adopted by the Heaven and Earth Society since the Ch'ing Dynasty and the form of "worshipping the devils, spirits and gods and taking 36 oaths"** could no longer meet the demands of the revolutionary situation. He painstakingly sought the truth from the West. He made use of certain forms of Christianity which had already become a tool of aggression and transformed its original doctrines. He founded the God Worshipping Society, and concentrated the demands and wisdom of the peasantry in the person of the only true God, "the Heavenly Emperor," while looking upon himself as His only representative on earth, so that "the strength of man takes the form of supernatural strength" (Selected Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. III, p. 354) in order to realize the demand of the peasantry for equality. So, Hung in his early revolutionary writings expressed this peasant revolutionary line: the revolutionary peasants, under the command of the only true God, "the Heavenly Emperor," joined together to wipe out the "ruler of the Hades" and his "disciples and troops," destroy the "world of mutual contention and slaughter," and realize the ideal of "the world as one family enjoying universal peace."*** The subsequent promulgation of the "Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom" and the implementation of various internal and external policies gave more concrete embodiment to this peasant revolutionary line.

Throwing away the cloak of religious myth in the revolutionary documents, we can see clearly that Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's peasant revolutionary line and its principal aspects are as follows:

First, firmly opposing the feudal emperor and the feudal system. Hung raised the traditional simple desire of peasants to oppose the feudal emperor and the feudal system over the ages to a new level. With the revolutionary authority and prestige of the "Heavenly Emperor," he pointed out

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* "Instructions on Enlightening the World by the Original Truth," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (I), pp. 91-92.

** "An Account of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo Uprising," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (VI), pp. 872-873.

*** "Instructions on Enlightening the World by the Original Truth," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (I), p. 92.

the irrationality of the existence of the feudal order, and declared "the world is one family, and all men on earth are brothers."* "Why should the monarch be selfish and autocratic?"** Over the ages emperors were "rulers of Hades."*** Those big and small officials, members of the land-owning gentry and devotees of Confucius and Mencius were the "disciples and troops of the ruler of Hades." All these evil persons were persons the broad masses of people "want to see destroyed completely and speedily."+ They should be thrown into the hell and not be allowed to rise ever again. This not only greatly displayed the fearless heroic spirit of successive generations of revolutionary peasants in unhorsing emperors, but also represented a vigorous effort to basically strip the feudal rulers of that sacred cloak of "the authority of the monarch is bestowed by God" and to negate the entire feudal autocratic system.

Second, firmly opposing the feudal land system. "What the peasants hope is this: expropriate the land of landlords." (Complete Works of Lenin, Vol. X, p. 384) Hung Hsiu-ch'üan developed the ideas of equality and equal distribution such as "equal distribution of land," "abolition of taxes," and "equalizing the noble and the base, the rich and the poor" embraced by the vast masses of peasants over the centuries, and embodied them in the "Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom." He clearly proposed: "All the land under heaven should be plowed by all people under heaven." He called for equal distribution of land "on a per capita basis, irrespective of sexes." Furthermore, in order that the vast masses of peasants could forever keep their land and would not again suffer from division between rich and poor, he designed an utopia where "land is plowed by all, food is shared by all, clothings are worn by all, and money is available to all; nowhere will distribution be unequal and people starve."++ Although this plan was not and could not be realized, such an ideal nevertheless considerably inspired the revolutionary fervor of the broad masses of peasants. In a period when China had already entered into a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society, abolition of the feudal system of land-ownership not only would be necessary for the development of capitalism in China, but would also strike at the foundations on which foreign capitalism depended in carrying out oppression and exploitation against the Chinese people. Therefore, it had a democratic kernel.

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* "Instructions on Awakening the World by the Original Truth," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (I), p. 92.

** "Song of Saving the World by the Original Truth," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (I), p. 87.

*** "Instructions on Awakening the World by the Original Truth," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (I), p. 97.

\+ Ibid., p. 93.

++ "Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (I), p. 321.

Third, class struggle in the sphere of ideology was raised to an extremely outstanding position. Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's revolution began with his opposition to Confucianism. From first to last he linked the political struggle with the ideological struggle against the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. Hung pointed out explicitly: "The causes for the evil deeds can always be traced to the Confucian books which teach people mostly wrong things,"* and the "Buddhists" "created numerous absurd, perverse doctrines" with the aim of "deceiving and ruining people under heaven."** Full of righteous revolutionary indignation, he brought Confucius, the "most respected and sacred teacher" honored by the ruling classes over the ages, to trial before the "Heavenly Father and Emperor," the incarnation of the revolutionary peasants. He denounced as "devils" the Jade Emperor, the ruler of Hades and big and small gods who, the ruling classes nonsensically alleged, held sway over people's life, death, fortune and misfortune, reduced them to "idols made of wood, stone, clay, and paper."+ After the T'ai-p'ing revolutionary regime was established, the ideological struggle was seen even more as an important aspect in implementing the peasant revolutionary line, and it was categorically declared that it was forbidden to preach the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. Counter-revolutionary Confucian scholars were resolutely suppressed, and a spectacular movement by the peasantry to denounce Confucius appeared. Where there is destruction, there must be construction. Under Hung's leadership, the T'ai-p'ing, in order to indoctrinate the masses with revolutionary ideas, not only set up a press censorship office and revised Confucian classics such as "Poetry" and "Documents," but also compiled its own "Three-Character Classics," the "Imperial Thousand-Character Edict," "Poems for the Young" and other popular revolutionary reading materials, which were intended to encourage the people to fight bravely. This revolutionary spirit of "not using Confucius and Mencius, not worshipping ghosts and gods," "not talking about Taoism" and "not using the Six Classics"++ was a bold negation of feudal ideology and brought the T'ai-p'ing's anti-feudal struggle in the ideological sphere to an unprecedentedly height. Particularly when the traitor Tseng Kuo-fan and the like hoisted the black banner of "restraining oneself and returning to propriety" and collaborated with foreign aggressors in frantically suppressing the T'ai-p'ing, this struggle between opposing Confucius and honoring Confucius manifested itself more distinctly as a struggle between revolution and counter-revolution, between patriotism and national betrayal, shining as it did with a new radiance of the Chinese people's counter-attack against the alliance between foreign and domestic reactionaries.

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* "The Heaven and Sun of Peace," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (II), p. 635.

** "Instructions on Awakening the World by the Original Truth," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (I), p. 93.

\+ Ibid., p. 94.

++ The I-ping Diary of Wang Hui-weng, Vol. III.

Fourth, bearing the new mission of opposing aggression. Under the situation where China began to sink into a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society, the fight against feudalism would necessarily lead to the fight against imperialism, and the two were connected. For this reason, the fight against external aggression had always been a part of Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's peasant revolutionary line. Born in Canton which was the first region to be invaded by foreign capitalism, Hung had deep resentment against the criminal acts of the Western gangsters. He strongly condemned the foreign aggressors who exported opium to China to cause tremendous disasters to the Chinese people. On the basis of such initial perceptual knowledge of aggressors and on the basis of his simple ideas of equality against "annexation" and against the strong "attacking the weak" and the many "bullying the few," Hung, proceeding from the revolutionary principle of safeguarding state sovereignty and national dignity, called for the establishment of equal relations between nations and states. "Every country has the right to preserve its own property but must not encroach on what others have." He urged that all the countries in the world "exchange truth and knowledge and treat each other with propriety."* He formulated the foreign policy of independence and keeping the initiative in our hands, firmly opposed the importation of opium, and refused to recognize the unequal treaties foreign aggressors concluded with the Ch'ing Government. In the wake of intensified collusion between foreign and domestic reactionaries, Hung's understanding of the aggressors also continued to deepen. When the aggressors tore off the mask of "neutrality" and openly joined the Ch'ing Government in suppressing the T'ai-p'ing, Hung immediately led the revolutionary people to fight back in a full demonstration of the patriotic stand and fearless revolutionary spirit of the peasantry. Such ideas against aggression developed in the midst of battle became increasingly apparent in Hung's peasant revolutionary line and played an increasingly militant role.

This peasant revolutionary line set by Hung Hsu-ch'üan was not only an inheritance of past peasant revolutionary lines, but was also a development in the new period of modern society. It concentrated the interests, demands and wisdom of the peasantry as well as embodying the will and orientation of struggle of the Chinese people. In order to assure the thorough implementation of the revolutionary line, Hung also laid down strict rules of discipline. This explained the wholehearted support the God Worshipping Society enjoyed among the broad masses of peasants and the people of various nationalities. Toward the end of the 1840's, members of the Society were already spread in southeast Kwangsi and the various prefectures and counties along the border of Kwangtung and Kwangsi, and a staunch leadership nucleus headed by Hung was formed in the course of the struggle against the reactionary forces. The masses who joined the God Worshipping Society "were all peasants and poor people,"** namely, poor peasants and handicraftsmen in the rural areas

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* "An Account of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo Uprising," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (VI), p. 854.

** "Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Confession."

with the strongest revolutionary urge. Since they suffered most from exploitation and oppression, they had the strongest revolutionary spirit of resistance. The God Worshipping Society composed of this revolutionary main force provided the strong class foundation and extensive mass foundation for the implementation of Hung's peasant revolutionary line.

(II)

Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's peasant revolutionary line was born in the storm of class struggle, and Hung and his loyal comrades-in-arms dedicated their lives to the fight for this line in the violent waves of class struggle.

The Chint'ien Uprising on January 11, 1851, was a great beginning of the revolutionary tempest. Although this peasant revolutionary contingent led by Hung had only several thousand men, they fought from the beginning for their own ideals in accordance with Hung's revolutionary line. Surrounded by the enemies on all sides, they declared supremacy in the areas under their control, instituted the Yung-an imperial system, and established a peasant revolutionary government. It declared categorically: the T'ai-p'ing heroes were determined to overthrow the decadent Ch'ing Dynasty and build their own world.

Seized with panic, the reactionary rulers of the Ch'ing Dynasty quickly realized from the revolutionary actions of the T'ai-p'ing army which "instituted bogus titles of kings and officials, keep their hair and change their clothes"* and was determined to fight the feudal dynasty, that this contingent with the strongest revolutionary urge was the "fiercest among the bandits"** and "posed a real danger in Kwangsi."*** So, from the winter of 1850 to the spring of 1852, a period of more than one year, the Ch'ing Government changed its governor of Kwangsi eight times, successively sent three inspector generals there, and stationed a reactionary army seven or eight times the size of the T'ai-p'ing army for "an all-out assault"+ against the latter. Meanwhile, in an effort to corrupt and disintegrate the revolutionary forces, it "bought off more informers, sowed seeds of discord, and offered material inducements to the ringleaders so they would upset each other"++ within the T'ai-p'ing army. Using counter-revolutionary dual tactics, the

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* Records of East China, Ulantai's Memorial in the first year of Hsienfeng, April 27.

** Records of East China, Vol. VII, Hsienfeng Reign.

*** Records of East China, Ulantai's Memorial in the first year of Hsienfeng, April 27.

\+ Records of East China, Vol. VII, Hsienfeng Reign.

++ Sequel to Records of East China, Vol. IX, Hsienfeng Reign.

Ch'ing Government vainly sought to strangle this young revolutionary contingent in its cradle. Under these circumstances, whether to persist in the peasant revolutionary line and dare to struggle to overthrow the Ch'ing Dynasty or to abandon the revolutionary goal and retreat before the enemy became a vital problem bearing on whether the revolution could develop victoriously.

"Though surrounded by the enemies on all sides, we are determined to fight to the last drop of our blood."* This was Hung's unequivocal reply. In these difficult circumstances, he encouraged the T'ai-p'ing army to "feel happy, fight actively, with patience and prowess." "The more you suffer, the more prowess you should display."** He called on the T'ai-p'ing army's "men and women generals to hold their weapons tight," "boldly kill the devils with unity of will," and "keep running on the heavenly path."*** They must fight for the overthrow of the Ch'ing Dynasty and for the establishment of a beautiful heavenly kingdom on earth. Under the guidance of Hung's revolutionary line, the T'ai-p'ing army "fed on wild plants"+ when it ran out of food, and accepted the most difficult revolutionary ordeal. When more of them fell sick or were wounded, greater mutual concern was displayed within the revolutionary ranks, and the "sick and wounded were properly looked after."++ When they ran out of ammunition, they seized it from the enemy. Thanks to all this, the T'ai-p'ing army, though facing hardly imaginable difficulties, was able to turn the tide many times and crush the encirclements and attacks by the enemy. Like "tigers breaking out of the cage," they charged out of Kwangsi and created an excellent situation. With the T'ai-p'ing army fighting so bravely, even the reactionary generals who led troops to suppress the T'ai-p'ings were shocked and said dismally, "Not only have we not seen such things before, we have also not heard about them in the past."+++ They even thought that the men of the T'ai-p'ing army were so valiant because they took a kind of "drug" that Hung Hsiu-ch'üan specially prepared for them.++++ They basically could not understand that once the revolutionary peasants accepted Hung's peasant revolutionary theory and line, they were able to generate such an overwhelming revolutionary spirit!

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* "Edict of Heavenly Mandate," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (I), p. 64.

** Ibid., pp. 66, 62.

*** Ibid., pp. 68, 60.

\+ "The Feeling and Truth of Heaven," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, p. 367.

++ "Edict of Heavenly Mandate," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (I), p. 64.

+++ Ulantai, "Report to Saishangah," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (VIII), p. 717.

++++ Chen T'ien-chüeh, "Letter to Chou Erh-nan," Short Course of Historical Materials of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, Vol. VI, p. 5.

In view of the enemy's attempt to destroy the T'ai-p'ing army from within by inducing the T'ai-p'ing generals to surrender, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan resolutely fought against capitulationism with a resolute stand from the very beginning. Constantly he taught his officers and men to be "sincere, firm and patient"* about the revolution, to "make up your mind to do something great and serve the country loyally," to preserve the revolutionary integrity, and "not be lured" into taking the "evil path."** Whenever revolts occurred, those responsible were promptly punished. Besieged at Chint'ien and having lost Fengmenyao, the T'ai-p'ing army found itself in an extremely precarious situation. Within the army itself there appeared the waverer Huang I-chen, who retreated before the enemy, while from the outside came the reactionary Confucian scholar Huang Meng-chün to persuade the army to surrender. When the army was besieged at Yung-an, the incident of Chou Hsi-neng who went over to the enemy, plotted a revolt and attempted to stage counter-revolutionary disturbances occurred, and there were other similar incidents. Hung Hsiu-ch'üan and others immediately took resolute measures; they beheaded the reactionary Confucian scholar, publicly tried and executed the renegades, and conducted education on anti-capitulationism within the whole army. This further aroused the morale of the fighting men and created favorable conditions for the development of the revolution.

"The correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything," Although the T'ai-p'ing army found its circumstances so harsh, fighting so violent and its sacrifices so tremendous, and although the old brothers of Hsinchou who joined the Chint'ien Uprising numbered only a thousand and more after their arrival in Nanking, having lost nearly four-fifths of their strength, yet, due to their dogged adherence to Hung's revolutionary line, they were able to grow from small to big, from weak to strong. The spark of revolution finally developed into a prairie fire. Having broken out of Kwangsi, they marched north, crossed the Tungt'ing Lake and captured the three towns of Wuhan. Then they marched east along the Yangtze River and took Nanking. "Wherever they went, they trampled underfoot everyone who challenged them like splitting bamboo. There was no battle they did not win, and no city they could not conquer."*** In half a year's time and more, they swept across the southeast, covering half of China. The revolutionary forces rapidly grew from several thousand men to a million strong. On the other hand, those who enjoyed far greater prestige than Hung Hsiu-ch'üan and whose armies were larger than the T'ai-p'ing -- such as the big-head sheep Chang Chao, the big carp T'ien Fang, and Chang Chia-hsiang who was once praised for "helping the weak and eliminating the strong" -- quickly accepted the offer of amnesty and enlistment from the Ch'ing Government either because they did not have a revolutionary line or because they

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* "Edict of Heavenly Mandate," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (I), p. 63.

** Ibid., p. 66.

*** "Family Letters of Meng Shih-yung," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (II), p. 755.

refused to take Hung's revolutionary line. They "acted recklessly and sought only to satisfy their immediate desires,"* and did not oppose the emperor. The revolutionary masses they once led were quickly disbanded, while they themselves "carried out justice on behalf of Heaven," helped the Ch'ing Government fight Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, "a brigand who did not carry out justice on behalf of Heaven," and became the sworn enemies of the T'ai-p'ing revolutionary army. Facts confirm that it was precisely because it was under the guidance of Hung's peasant revolutionary line that the T'ai-p'ing revolutionary forces were able to develop and swell rapidly.

"The fundamental problem of all revolutions is that of state power." After the T'ai-p'ing army led by Hung Hsiu-ch'üan stormed and captured Nanking in March 1853, it changed the name of Nanking into T'ienching, established the capital there, and formally founded a peasant revolutionary regime in confrontation with the Ch'ing Government. Meantime, with the revolutionary political power as the lever, Hung pushed his peasant revolutionary line in a general manner. Politically he promulgated an agrarian program, the "Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom," formulated various policies, and severely suppressed the reactionary forces seeking to undermine the revolutionary political power. Ideologically he launched a mammoth movement to oppose and denounce Confucianism. "Dare to call Confucius and Mencius devils and burn the classics and documents."** "Those who read, collect, buy or sell these classics are all to be beheaded."+ Militarily, in order to thoroughly destroy the reactionary government of the Ch'ing Dynasty and launch the northern and western expeditions, he crushed the big enemy camps encircling T'ienching south and north of the Yangtze. In the matter of external relations, the T'ai-p'ing Government upheld the foreign policy of equality, state independence and national dignity, and thwarted the attempt of foreign aggressors to force it to accept the unequal treaties which they imposed on the Ch'ing Government. By 1856, the T'ai-p'ing was in its heyday. The people of various nationalities in all parts of the country, under the direct influence of the T'ai-p'ing, rose in uprisings one after the other, and some accepted the official calendar of the T'ai-p'ing far away from them. A nationwide revolutionary high tide with T'ai-p'ing as the core took shape quickly. All of this represented a victory for Hung's peasant revolutionary line.

While stepping up its military encirclement campaign against the T'ai-p'ing army, the Ch'ing Government also pinned its counter-revolutionary hope on "pacifying"++ renegades from the revolution or on inciting certain

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* "The Feeling and Truth of Heaven," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (I), p. 367.

** "Short Course of Historical Materials of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo," Vol. VI, p. 386.

\+ "New Musical Scores in Chinling," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (IV), p. 735.

++ Ch'en Hui-yen, "Notes on Events in Wuchang," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (IV), p. 600.

ambitionists to "set up their flags elsewhere" so as to topple the revolutionary political power from within and change the revolutionary line. In this way, with "mutual fighting" within the revolutionary forces, they might "reap the profit as the fishermen."* An American imperialist also said blatantly: "internal squabble"** was the only way to prevent the victory of the T'ai-p'ing.

The sharp and complicated class struggle was bound to be reflected within the T'ai-p'ing revolutionary ranks. Just when the revolution was victoriously developing in 1856, the activities of Yang Hsiu-ch'ing who sought to sabotage unity and pursue the highest authority for himself first appeared within the T'ai-P'ing and then the counter-revolutionary riots staged by Wei Ch'ang-hui and Shih Ta-k'ai's attempt to engineer a counter-revolutionary split. Hung Hsiu-ch'üan led the army and people of the Heavenly Kingdom to carry out a resolute struggle against them. As to Yang Hsiu-ch'ing, who was formerly a "coal burner" and who performed merits in the early period and held great military and political power in the government, despite the fact that after coming to T'ienching he "acted arrogantly and without thought of the consequences,"*** Hung Hsiu-ch'üan at first still tried to persuade and unite with him for the sake of the general good. But when Yang developed to the extent of "calling himself an emperor," Hung carried out an uncompromising struggle against him. Wei Ch'ang-hui was a landlord class element who wormed his way into the peasant revolutionary ranks. When he massacred tens of thousands of revolutionary officers and men of the Heavenly Kingdom and staged counter-revolutionary disturbances aimed at usurping the power of the Heavenly Kingdom and murdering T'ien Wang /Heavenly King/, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, ignoring his own personal safety, angrily condemned him and determinedly directed the army and people of the Heavenly Kingdom to "unite together"+ to remove him and safeguard the political power of the Heavenly Kingdom. As for Shih Ta-k'ai's attempt at a counter-revolutionary split, it was firmly resisted by Hung. From Shih's threat to "bring his troops back to the court to attack and destroy T'ienching,"++ Hung perceived Shih's aim and remained highly vigilant against Shih's double-dealing tactics to make use of his personal prestige to win general support and to monopolize the power of the Heavenly Kingdom. At last, having failed in his conspiracy, Shih embarked on the criminal path of counter-revolutionary splits and took away with him more than 200,000 finest troops.

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* Chang Te-chien, "Summary Reports on the Enemy's Movements," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (III), p. 295.

** Quoted from Lo Erh-kang, An Inquiry into the Historical Events of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, p. 294.

*** "Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Confession."

\+ Ibid.

++ See Lo Erh-kang, An Inquiry into the Historical Events of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, p. 276.

Hung Hsiu-ch'üan remembered and cherished those officers and men of the Heavenly Kingdom who were cheated into leaving him by Shih who told them "I have received a secret edict (from T'ien Wang) ordering us to return to western Kwangtung where we a to recruit men of talent" to "open up the frontier regions"* for the Heavenly Kingdom. So, when Chi Ch'ing-yüan, Chu I-tien and others firmly broke away from Shih's splittist road and led more than 100,000 troops to "return to the court from ten thousand li" from Kwangsi, they were specially commended by Hung as "Heavenly troops supporting the kingdom," while he sneered at Shih for his counter-revolutionary conspiracy to create a split. From the fact that when later Li Hsiu-ch'eng proposed recalling Shih to take charge of the affairs of the kingdom as prime minister, Hung angrily dismissed him and deprived him of his title, we can clearly perceive Hung's contempt for Shih and determination to drop him.

Wei Ch'ang-hui's counter-revolutionary massacre in T'iencheng and Shih Ta-k'ai's criminal splits achieved the purpose enemies from outside could not dream of, and greatly demoralized the T'ai-p'ing kingdom. Overjoyed, the reactionaries took the opportunity to rebuild the military camps surrounding T'ienching south and north of the Yangtze River. Tseng Kuo-fan, who had been badly trounced by the T'ai-p'ing army, now jubilantly declared that he would destroy T'ai-p'ing in 1857 or a year later.

But the reactionaries rejoiced too soon. Hung Hsiu-ch'üan was neither frightened by the rebellious and splittist activities of the enemies from within nor was frightened into submission by the powerful appearance of the enemies from the outside. He persisted in his peasant revolutionary line and fought arduously to turn the tide. First he set about stabilizing the political situation and rebuilding the leadership nucleus. Hung personally took charge of the court affairs, and successively promoted Hung Jen-kan, one of the earliest members of the God Worshipping Society and a loyal fighter of the T'ai-p'ing, Ch'en Yü-ch'eng, a young military officer and others to leadership positions -- to assist him in handling military and political affairs. Drawing on the lessons learned from the intrigues and revolts of Wei, Shih and others, he summoned his court to "do everything openly and aboveboard without personal favor and secret motives."** Militarily, Hung personally directed the P'ukou, Sanno and other campaigns, flattening the military camps of the Ch'ing troops north of the Yangtze River, wiping out the crack troops of the counter-revolutionary Hunan army and breaking the enemy's siege of Anch'ing. The situation of the T'ai-p'ing was stabilized.

Some people say that after his entry into T'ienching, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan hid himself in the palace and did not attend to state affairs. This apparently is a superficial view. As a matter of fact, he consistently took

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* "Memorial to T'ien Wang from 67 Persons Including Chi Ch'ing-yüan and Chu I-tien," Supplemental Edition of Cultural Relics and Illustrations of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, p. 52.

** "The Gospels," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (II), p. 514.

charge of the major policies on the basis of his peasant revolutionary line, led and directed major struggles, and therefore enjoyed lofty prestige in the court and among the people. He was actually the incarnation of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, for a long time those who intrigued and conspired did not dare to openly hoist the banner of opposing T'ien Wang, and once their true features of opposing T'ien Wang were exposed, they were immediately toppled by the army and people of the Heavenly Kingdom on charges of treason and met with an ignominious end.

Hung Hsiu-ch'üan exerted tremendous efforts to relieve the critical situation of the T'ai-p'ing. However, after the second opium war, the Chinese and foreign reactionaries had formed a counter-revolutionary alliance and were much more powerful than Hung. Within the kingdom itself there was the interference and sabotage of Li Hsiu-ch'eng's capitulationist line. As a result, the kingdom was faced with daily growing difficulties. What was especially commendable about Hung was that, though faced with a critical situation, he was still full of confidence in his revolutionary cause. Unwaveringly he led the army and people of the kingdom to wage a resolute struggle against the joint attacks of domestic and foreign reactionaries and Li Hsiu-ch'eng's capitulationist line, exhibiting a noble spirit of revolutionary heroism and unyielding revolutionary integrity.

In the course of revolutionary practice, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan not only continued to deepen and increase his understanding of the most ferocious enemies -- foreign aggressors, but also fought them even more resolutely. From first to last he was firmly opposed to national capitulationism. Before the foreign aggressors openly took part in the armed suppression of the T'ai-p'ing, they offered Hung a "proposal" of helping the T'ai-p'ing overthrow the Ch'ing Dynasty and "dividing the land equally." Moreover, they threatened Hung, saying: "If you do not agree," then we will take "other actions" against you. Hung firmly smashed this shameless political blackmail, and indicated that he would never "lead the foreign devils into the country."* As for those aggressive elements donning the religious cloaks -- the Western missionaries, Hung, though he had treated them with propriety because of certain religious similarities, always stuck to the principle of national independence, and under no circumstances would he allow foreign missionaries to oppose T'ien Wang, who represented the revolutionary peasants, "accepting the Heavenly mandate to subvert the existing government"** in the name of preaching and discussing religious doctrines. Nor would he allow the aggressors to ask China to "open its doors"*** to the West and turn China into their colony in the name of setting up Christian churches. When the foreign

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* "Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Confession."

** "Historical Materials of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo in the Blue Paper of the British Government," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, (VI), p. 896.

*** Lo Hsiao-ch'üan, "The Truth of Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's Revolution."

aggressors tore off the mask of "neutrality" and carried out open armed suppression against the T'ai-p'ing, Hung angrily denounced them for "posing as friends and secretly aiding the Manchu devils."* In the revolutionary spirit of fearing nothing, he called on all officers and men of the T'ai-p'ing army "to fight bravely against the enemies and their foreign allies. You must abide by the imperial decrees, have no fear of the plots of the devils, and fight bravely until universal peace is attained."** The gallant officers and men of the T'ai-p'ing army firmly followed Hung's policy against aggression and boycotted Li Hsiu-ch'eng's erroneous proposal to renew the "old friendship" and form "new alliances"+ with the aggressors. Again and again they trounced the aggressive troops so badly that they dared not take on the T'ai-p'ing army. Some leaders of the aggressive army were killed or wounded. This made the counter-revolutionary generals of the Ch'ing Dynasty lament: "The barbarians are as afraid of the long-hair men as we are."++ Hung's heightened understanding of foreign aggressors and the firm blows he dealt to them demonstrated even more clearly the nature of the T'ai-p'ing's opposition to foreign aggression.

Within the revolutionary government itself, Hung insisted on "getting rid of the old and establishing the new," calling for the establishment of a "new heaven, new earth, and new world." He carried out a resolute struggle against the capitulationist line represented by Li Hsiu-ch'eng and in struggle enriched certain aspects of the peasant revolutionary line.

In the political field, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan approved "New Manual on Administration," a programmatic document submitted by Hung Jen-kan. In order to strengthen the dictatorship over the reactionaries, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan re-affirmed the need to "remove the evil and keep what is right, and execute the devils and those who perpetrate crimes."+++ With extreme wrath he criticized the regressive proposals submitted by Li Hsiu-ch'eng for "imitating the old system to benefit all parts of the country" and for "dealing with everyone at

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* Ling Li, An Eye-Witness Account of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, Vol. II, p. 325.

** North China Herald, 1863.

\+ "Letter from 'Chung Wang' Li Hsiu-ch'eng to the British Envoy in Shanghai," in Li Kuei, Summary Reports of Military Affairs in Chinling, Vol. III.

++ T'ung Chih-chao, A Full Account of Preparations for Dealing With the Barbarians, Vol. VIII, p. 43.

+++ "New Manual on Administration," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (II), p. 538.

home and abroad with magnanimity."* He openly forbade Li Hsiu-ch'eng to carry out those revisionist policies of exercising "benevolent government" toward landlords and carrying out suppression against peasants who refused to pay rent. Hung was fully convinced that "the people in and out of government like this new world," and refuted those restorationist and regressive fallacies that "the new is not as good as the old."** Meantime, he strictly banned the "formation of cliques and parties,"*** angrily denouncing the acts of Liu Hsiu-ch'eng who put Kiangsu and Chekiang under his control, disobeyed orders, and "benefits himself at the expense of others and the public."+

In the economic field, the T'ai-p'ing in 1860 re-issued the "Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom." Hung Hsiu-ch'üan continued to adopt the proposal for equal distribution of land to arouse the enthusiasm of the revolutionary peasants, showing his firm resolve to keep to his peasant revolutionary line. Furthermore, with great enthusiasm, warmth and interest he accepted the reform proposals such as building modern industry made in Hung Jen-kan's "New Manual on Administration" in order to safeguard and rescue the T'ai-p'ing peasant revolutionary regime. Although these proposals could not be implemented due to historical limitations, this clearly showed that he was continuing his painstaking search for truth and fighting endlessly for the peasant revolutionary cause.

In the ideological sphere, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan and Hung Jen-kan, in order to strike at the enemies' daily growing corrupt activities and the restorationist acts of Li Hsiu-ch'eng and company in honoring Confucius, put forward the correct view that "to overcome perplexities is to overcome the enemies"++ and continued to deepen the struggle to criticize Confucius. In 1862, he formally published "The Heaven and Sun of Peace," which was full of the militant spirit of opposing Confucius. When Li Hsiu-ch'eng's lackeys staged the farce of worshipping Confucius and the Buddha in Suchou, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan in 1862 resolutely dealt head-on blows to them by executing the examination officer who went to Suchow to preside over the civil service examination and who put forward subjects of "Four Books" and "Five Classics."+++

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* "Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Confession."

** "The True Qualities of Heroes," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (II), p. 590.

*** "New Manual on Administration," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (II), p. 524.

\+ "Huang Wen-ying's Confession," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (II), p. 858.

++ "'Kan Wang' Hung Pao-chih," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (II), p. 661.

+++ "Poems Recording Events in Chinling," Short Course of Historical Materials of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, Vol. VI, p. 401.

In the military area, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan and Hung Jen-kan correctly called for defending the upper reaches of the Yangtze above T'ienching and waging a life-and-death struggle against the most ferocious enemy, Tseng Kuo-fan. They made the decision to hang on to T'ienching and defend the peasant revolutionary regime. Moreover, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan severely denounced the cowardly attitude of Li Hsiu-ch'eng who took refuge in the southeast and dared not put up frontal resistance against Tseng Kuo-fan. This demonstrated his spirit of revolutionary heroism, his determination to fight to the end in face of great danger.

The battle to defend T'ienching in 1864 was a decisive battle between revolution and counter-revolution, and the struggle between capitulation and anti-capitulation was also most violent. After Hung Hsiu-ch'üan discovered signs of attempt by Li Hsiu-ch'eng and company to go over to the enemy and stage a revolt, he became still more vigilant and ordered that all those who secretly attempted to surrender "be executed together with their families, and those who know about this but do not report deserve the same capital punishment."* He staunchly directed the battle to defend T'ienching. When food ran out, he took the lead in eating wild plants. He "never yielded and did not change his mind even as he died."** In early June, 1864, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan died of illness. He lived, fought and died for the T'ai-p'ing revolutionary cause. On July 19, T'ienching fell. The several thousand T'ai-p'ing officers and men fought to the last drop of their blood, and "none surrendered." Their fighting spirit fully demonstrated the revolutionary integrity of the revolutionary peasants and shone with the immortal radiance of Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's peasant revolutionary line.

(III)

The history of Hung Hsiu-ch'üan in persisting in the peasant revolutionary line and leading the T'ai-p'ing revolution to fight bravely has left us with the following several important enlightenments.

To make revolution requires a clearcut revolutionary line. Under the new historical conditions when China had already begun to sink into a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, representing the aspirations and demands of the peasantry, led the T'ai-p'ing heroes to shoulder the mission of opposing imperialism and feudalism given them by history. In the practice of struggle he proposed and carried out a peasant revolutionary line which was at the time most revolutionary in its anti-feudal and anti-aggression character. Under the guidance of this line, the T'ai-p'ing heroes organized a mighty revolutionary army and established a peasant revolutionary government

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* "Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Confession."

** "Regulations on Determining the Official Ranks," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (II), p. 551.

that lasted 14 years. Galloping over the length and breadth of 17 provinces, they dealt heavy blows to the foreign and domestic reactionary forces, thereby accelerating the fall of the Ch'ing Dynasty, pushing the ideological liberation of the people, and delaying the course of China turning into a semi-colonial land. The T'ai-p'ing revolution performed shining merits for the revolutionary cause of the Chinese people and produced a far-reaching impact on modern Chinese history. "Strong grass grows on the central plains watered by blood; spring shines with glory on the cold and frozen earth." Although the T'ai-p'ing revolution led by Hung Hsiu-ch'üan failed tragically, the revolutionary, fighting spirit of the T'ai-p'ing heroes will shine forever. Their revolutionary experience is a piece of precious legacy to the Chinese people. Their revolutionary spirit of daring to struggle and to win and their anti-feudal, anti-aggression revolutionary line have for a long time inspired and encouraged the Chinese people to march toward revolution in spite of heavy sacrifices. The anti-imperialist, patriotic heroes of the great I Ho Tuan and the fighters of the 1911 Revolution took up struggle because they were deeply encouraged by the heroic exploits of the T'ai-p'ing revolution. The great democratic revolutionary, Sun Yat-sen, once acknowledged himself as the successor of Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's revolutionary cause. The struggle of the T'ai-p'ing revolution and Hung's peasant revolutionary line shine brilliantly and permanently in history.

Just as class struggle does not cease, the struggle between the two lines does not stop. Because the T'ai-p'ing revolution dealt heavy blows to the foreign and domestic reactionaries, all class enemies harbored utter hatred against this peasant revolutionary regime and Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's peasant revolutionary line. While carrying out armed suppression, they also resorted to all possible means to sabotage the T'ai-p'ing from within. Such a sharp and complicated class struggle caused the struggle between the two lines within the T'ai-p'ing to be extremely acute all along. In a decade and more, the struggle between the effort to persist in revolution and the attempt to restore the old order and return to the past, between the effort to preserve unity and the attempt to create a split, and between those operating openly and aboveboard and those carrying out intrigues and conspiracies, ran through the entire course of the T'ai-p'ing. Despite the fact that the line struggle might take different forms in different times, essentially it was a struggle over whether to adhere to Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's revolutionary line and oppose feudalism and aggression or to change Hung's revolutionary line and practice class and national capitulationism. Those chieftains who practiced capitulationism and revisionism, when they failed in their conspiracies, might even stage counter-revolutionary disturbances or create open counter-revolutionary splits in order to realize their aim of usurping power and restoring the old order. These shocking facts of line struggle indicate that to defend a revolutionary line, it is necessary, while fighting against enemies from the outside, to persist constantly in the line struggle within in order to remove the interference and sabotage of the revolutionary line by the erroneous line.

The history of the T'ai-p'ing revolution also amply shows that without a scientific revolutionary line which conforms to the laws of social development, it will be impossible to lead the revolution to final victory. Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's peasant revolutionary line was revolutionary and thus was capable

of directing the people to stage a drama full of sound and color. However, Hung was after all a peasant revolutionary, and the peasant class was not the representative of new productive forces and new relations of production. "The characteristics of their small production restrict their political vision." (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, p. 167) Without the guidance of a scientific world view, it is impossible to formulate a scientific revolutionary line that conforms to the laws of social development. Hung established the revolutionary organization, God Worshipping Society, and organized the masses to fight for their own liberation, but he was unable to free himself from the bondage of religion. He founded a peasant revolutionary government, but was unable to build a new socio-economic system to replace the old feudal socio-economic system. In accordance with the peasants' demand for equality and equal distribution of land, he formulated the "Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom," but "the more elaborately it was formulated, the more it sank into pure fantasy." (Selected Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. III, p. 409) And it could not be thoroughly implemented. Hung Hsiu-ch'üan consistently fought against the various mistaken tendencies and erroneous lines and sought to solve the various contradictions in the course of the revolution, yet he was unable to consciously understand the laws and characteristics of class struggle and to completely overcome all kinds of erroneous lines. In short, the T'ai-p'ing heroes, under the guidance of Hung's peasant revolutionary line and through arduous struggle, developed a huge revolutionary power that had never been shown by past peasant wars and reached the peak of the old-type peasant wars. However, due to the class limitations of the peasants, under the historical conditions where China turned into a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society, and faced with the joint attacks of the domestic and foreign reactionaries, the T'ai-p'ing finally failed. This fully confirmed the truth: "Without the leadership of the proletariat, the Chinese revolution cannot be victorious." (Chairman Mao, "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party")

Tikhvinskiy, the hired scholar of Soviet revisionist social-imperialism, and his like, in the name of the peasants' "class limitations," deny the anti-feudal, anti-aggression revolutionary nature of Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's peasant revolutionary line and the T'ai-p'ing, and even say that T'ai-p'ing could not be described as "revolution" but could only be described as "anti-Manchu." At the same time, confusing black and white, they fanatically praise the renegade Liu Hsiu-ch'eng and the splittists like Shih Ta-k'ai. They curse our criticism of these renegades as "unfair verdict." The aim of such strange arguments is to "slander the peasant revolutionary struggle, slander the Chinese history, and slander China." (Chairman Mao, "Serious Attention Should Be Paid to the Discussion of the Film The Story of Wu Hsün") They advocate the justification of capitulation and splits in an oblique attack on Mao Tsetung thought and his revolutionary line and in order to create an historical basis for revisionist usurpation of power and restoration of the old order. But they over-estimate their strength like "mayflies which want to gobble a big tree." The frantic accusations of the enemies do not in the least tarnish the brilliance of the T'ai-p'ing heroic exploits and Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's peasant revolutionary line, still less can they prevent the hundreds of millions of the Chinese people from marching ahead triumphantly along Chairman Mao's revolutionary line!

The great exploits of Hung Hsiu-ch'üan and the T'ai-p'ing revolution will, like the sun and the moon, shine forever in the glorious historical annals of the Chinese people's revolution against imperialism and feudalism!

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# Li Hsiu-ch'eng -- A Mirror of Revisionism and Capitulationists

by

Chang Hai-p'eng (张海鹏)

(Li-shih Yen-chiu /Historical Research/, No. 1, February 20, 1976)

Chairman Mao points out: "The merit of the book Water Margin lies in capitulation. It serves as teaching material by negative example to help all people recognize capitulationists." Chairman Mao's instruction has revealed Sung Chiang's true features as a capitulationist practicing revisionism in the guise of a peasant uprising leader. This is of tremendous significance in our efforts to criticize revisionism and capitulationism practiced by Liu Shao-ch'i and Lin Piao, uphold Marxism-Leninism, combat and prevent revisionism, and implement Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line.

Capitulationists like Sung Chiang appeared in the history of peasant wars in both ancient and modern times. Li Hsiu-ch'eng, an important general in the latter period of the T'ai-p'ing Heavenly Kingdom, was a typical example. When Li was taken captive after the fall of T'ienching in 1864, he wrote a confession running to tens of thousands of words to implore the "great Ch'ing emperor" and the Viceroy of Kiangsu and Chekiang, Tseng Kuo-fan, for mercy. In his "ten-point memorial for surrender" to the Ch'ing court, he vainly attempted to turn over to the enemy several hundred thousand T'ai-p'ing troops, who were still battling north and south of the Yangtze River, and filled the role of a falcon in the suppression of the peasant revolution. How utterly despicable and vicious he was!

Previously some people used various sophistries to cover up and defend Li Hsiu-ch'eng's defection. Once put down in writing, iron-clad facts are incontestable. After a stormy debate, the revolutionary people clearly recognized Li's true features. But why did he defect after he was captured? Why did he, carrying the exalted title of "Chung Wang," betray the peasant revolution and become a sinner? On the basis of Chairman Mao's comment on Water Margin, we should see how Li practiced revisionism and became a capitulationist before he defected. Facts recorded in history prove that those who practiced revisionism were all capitulationists. Modern revisionist chieftains like Liu Shao-ch'i, Lin Piao and the Soviet revisionist renegade clique are contemporary capitulationists, and Li is an historical mirror of revisionism and capitulationists.

## (I)

The T'ai-p'ing revolution, a great, mighty struggle of crushing force against the Ch'ing Dynasty, an imperialist lackey, was launched by the Chinese people in modern times to establish an independent and

democratic society. In this great revolutionary movement, the struggle between the two classes and two roads was unusually violent. Wei Ch'ang-hui's counter-revolutionary revolt of 1856 and Shih Ta-k'ai's secession of 1857 were reflections within the peasant revolution of the violent class struggle which raged in society at the time. This counter-revolutionary attempt by the landlord class to alter the revolutionary line from within the T'ai-p'ing seriously endangered the T'ai-p'ing revolutionary cause. Coincident with this, the Ch'ing rulers intensified military suppressions. The Hunan army led by Tseng Kuo-fan and later the Hunan troops under Tso Tsung-t'ang and the Huai troops of Li Hung-chang besieged the T'ai-p'ing army from different directions, thus extending the black hands of counter-revolution to the heartland of the T'ai-p'ing base area. It was at this crucial juncture of class struggle that Li Hsiu-ch'eng assumed leadership of the peasant revolution. In the face of this serious situation, whether to firmly carry out the line of the T'ai-p'ing peasant revolution, consolidate the ranks, unite the whole army and maintain the same vigorous, revolutionary spirit displayed at the initial phase of the revolution against the landlord class and its general boss -- the feudal emperor, and develop the revolutionary situation, or to revise the line of peasant revolution, return to the old order by submitting and capitulating to the landlord class and lead the revolution to defeat -- this became a most acute question placed before the T'ai-p'ing leaders. On this question, a violent struggle unfolded between Hung Hsiu-ch'üan and other leaders of the peasant revolution, and Li Hsiu-ch'eng. Facts prove that Li betrayed the program of the peasant revolution, put forward a revisionist ideological and political line, and became the main representative of the revisionist, capitulationist line in the latter phase of T'ai-p'ing.

Following Shih Ta-k'ai's break with the revolution and his departure with his troops, Li Hsiu-ch'eng in his capacity as the second in command proposed to Hung Hsiu-ch'üan in the summer and autumn of 1857, urging him to "follow the old system to bring boon to all sides," to "deal with everyone with magnanimity" and to "employ only the talented," vainly trying to push Shih Ta-k'ai, the ringleader of the secessionist line, onto the stage.* What did Li mean by "following the old system"? He meant, in his own words, "benevolence and love," that is, "government by virtue," or "rules of propriety."** This shows what he advocated was a copy of Confucius' "restrain oneself and return to propriety," the line of returning to the old order and regression. His vain attempt to restore the ideological and political systems of the feudal landlord class was a negation of the T'ai-p'ing peasant revolution. Since this

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* "Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Confession," photostat copy.

** Ibid.

proposal completely revised the line of the peasant revolution, it was of course firmly rejected by Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, leader of the peasant revolution.

In sharp contrast with this capitulationist line of returning to the old order was the "change-the-old and introduce-the-new" line formulated by Hung Jen-kan on the basis of Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's revolutionary ideas. Hung Jen-kan called for "reform of all institutions and the uprooting of all heretical doctrines" before it would be possible to build a "new world of new persons"* in the ideal of the peasants. Ideologically and politically, two diametrically opposing lines existed, with one advocating "following the old system" and return to the old order and the other "changing the old and introducing the new." Giving a forceful rebuttal to Li Hsiu-ch'eng's line of returning to the old order, Hung Jen-kan said: "If people of our Heavenly Court continue to follow the heterodox practices," "how can we proclaim ourselves as something new?"**

Despite the arduous struggles in the military, political and economic spheres against the feudal ruling class and foreign aggressors in the latter phase of T'ai-p'ing, Li Hsiu-ch'eng did not learn anything useful from these struggles. Instead of overcoming his ideological and political inclinations toward capitulating to the class enemy, he allowed them to develop with the intensification of class struggle. This could not but arouse the attention of Hung Hsiu-ch'üan and other revolutionary leaders, who remained highly vigilant against him. When Hung discovered in 1859 that Li had corresponded with the defector Li Chao-shou and that he could jeopardize the revolutionary cause, he warned Li of the grave consequences. Although Hung later sent Li a gift of silks and conferred on him the title of "Chung Wang" /King of Loyalty/, he did so to caution Li in hopes he would remain forever loyal to the T'ai-p'ing cause. But Li remained unrepentant. When with the full backing of Ch'en Yü-ch'eng and his forces in 1860, he seized the base areas of Kiangsu and Chekiang, he began to translate into practice his ideological and political inclination toward revising the peasant revolution and practiced class capitulationism in a big way.

Li Hsiu-ch'eng's capitulationism found expression in the military, political and economic aspects. Militarily, he belittled the upper reaches but took serious account of the lower reaches /of the Yangtze River/, and this resulted in grave strategic errors. He wavered and hesitated regarding the implementation of the correct policy to deploy forces along the upper reaches in order to defend T'ienching and was

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* "The True Qualities of Heroes," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, Vol. II, pp. 587, 590.

** Ibid., p. 589.

seized with defeatist feelings. Defeatism in military affairs is a reflection in concentrated form of capitulationism in political affairs. What follows is an account of Li Hsiu-ch'eng's revisionist line that favored capitulation to the class enemy on the question of political power and economic protection to the interests of the landlord class.

(II)

Chairman Mao points out: In feudal society "the feudal landlord state was the organ of power protecting this system of feudal exploitation.... The emperor reigned supreme in the feudal state, appointing officials in charge of the armed forces, the law courts, the treasury and state granaries in all parts of the country and relying on the landed gentry as the mainstay of the entire system of feudal rule." ("The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party") The attitude toward the landlord government and the landed gentry is a basic question of principle in dealing with the entire feudal system, the feudal state, and the feudal emperor. At its inception the T'ai-p'ing pursued the revolutionary line of "eradicating heresy and upholding righteousness," unyielding in its spirit of dealing with the Ch'ing emperor and fighting against all corrupt officials, local despots and evil gentry. Hung Hsiu-ch'üan pointed out explicitly in 1862: "Killing the demons and those who commit crimes is inevitable." He firmly adhered to the peasant revolutionary idea of "uprooting the demons and monsters" and reaffirmed his determination of remaining irreconcilable to the landlord class and its chief ringleader.* Li Hsiu-ch'eng did exactly the opposite in the Kiangsu-Chekiang regions in complete betrayal of this peasant revolutionary line.

On September 16, 1860, Huang Wen-chin, a commander of Ch'en Yü-ch'eng's force, took Ch'angshu and Chaowen and smashed the feudal political power established there. This struck blows at the landlords, local despots and officials and completely rooted out the old feudal order in both places. Violent means that were used to put down the counter-revolution conformed to the T'ai-p'ing peasant revolutionary line. This revolutionary situation was indeed fine, not a terrible mess. However, only 22 days after Huang's men entered the city, Li Hsiu-ch'eng ordered Huang to "return to Wuhu"** on the pretext that his men had over-stayed. Li then assigned his trusted lieutenant Ch'ien Kuei-jen to take charge of Ch'angshu and Chaowen. Ch'ien, a renegade and counter-revolutionary hiding inside the peasant revolution, took advantage of his office to contact local landlords and told them he was on orders from Li to rectify what Huang had done in "allowing his men to kill and commit arson" so the

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* See T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, Vol. II, pp. 532, 538.

** "Records of Disturbances by Bandits from the Sea," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, Vol. V, p. 368.

"victimized" landlords could be "given help and consolation."* In Li Hsiu-ch'eng's view, Huang was guilty of "murder and arson," while he himself insisted on "benevolence, kindliness and cherishing the people." This naturally gave rise to the struggle between the two lines. In this sense, reference to "murder and arson" was clearly a vilification of the peasant revolution by the landlord class, a counter-revolutionary thesis that proceeded from the interests of the landlord class to oppose the peasant revolution. The fact that Li cited this to reprove Huang, a staunch fighter of the peasant revolution, showed that he took the stand of the landlord class and betrayed the peasant revolutionary line. He was thus identified with the group within the revolutionary ranks that favored a messy situation.

This group followed the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, such as the "old system" of "cherishing the people with benevolence and kindliness." Instead of suppressing the landlords, local despots and ringleaders of reactionary groups, it assigned them important tasks to appease them in every possible way. This development resulted in many T'ai-p'ing power bases in the Kiangsu-Chekiang areas becoming the tool of the landlord class for exercising dictatorship over the peasantry.

The situation was particularly serious in southern Kiangsu. Li Hsiu-ch'eng teamed up with Hsiung Wan-ch'üan, the general defending Suchou, in practicing the class capitulationist line of "recruiting all defectors."** As a result, despotic landlords and ringleaders of reactionary groups, such as Hsü Shao-ch'ü of Yungch'ang, Hua I-lun of T'angkou, and Fei Yü-ts'un of Chouchuang, all got into the peasant revolutionary regime and shared its political power. It must be pointed out that when the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution was raging fiercely, it was permissible for the revolutionary side to use the revolutionary tactics to divide and disintegrate a part of the wavering adversaries in order to concentrate all forces for the assault on the stubborn foes. However, practicing class capitulationism to the counter-revolutionary armed forces under the general principle of "recruiting all defectors" should be resolutely condemned. Hsü Shao-ch'ü, a despotic and big landlord of the Yungchang area in Ch'angchou county, for instance, was formerly a tax official of the Ch'ing Dynasty. To resist the T'ai-p'ing army, he organized a landlord armed body of several thousand men and ruled as a bully in Kiangsu's border towns. When the T'aip'ing army marched into Suchou and Ch'angshu, this reactionary armed band resisted desperately. Disregarding the objections of his generals, Li Hsiu-ch'eng did everything possible to recruit and enlist this reactionary landlord armed force. Hsü was even given a title so he could keep

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* "Ch'iuwen Diary," Materials of Modern History, 1963, No. I, p. 95.

** "Records of Disturbances by Bandits from the Sea," op. cit., p. 368.

his entire counter-revolutionary armed force, in addition to having the power to appoint local officials and "commanders of local detachments in Ch'angchou county."* Under Hsü's guidance, the landlords in various villages revived their practice of oppressing the poor peasants politically and exploiting them economically. The political power of this area, on the surface carrying the T'ai-p'ing signboard, was in reality exercised by the landlord class. To make matters even more serious, Hsü took advantage of the trust shown in him by Li and others to make secret contacts with the successive viceroys of Kiangsu, Hsüeh Huan and Li Hung-chang. Having received the Ch'ing government's token of second degree honors, he began actively to plot for large-scale counter-revolutionary disturbances in the Suchou and Ch'angshu area.

It was such a counter-revolutionary element with a long list of crimes that received direct support from a number of senior T'ai-p'ing generals. Teng Kuang-ming, a renegade and a deputy commander, told Hsü, "If officials in Kiangsu province refuse to cooperate with you, you should report to me, and I would report to 'Chung Wang" Li Hsiu-ch'eng to see to it that you would not labor in vain."** Teng's trust in Hsü fully bared the former's hideous features of class capitulationism. Li Hsiu-ch'eng even went out of his way to express his concern. Even while he was rushing reinforcements to T'ienching he still made some comment on Hsü's sick leave application slip, urging him to use his discretion in attending to local affairs and in mediating between dissenting generals and trusting that he would carry out well the tasks entrusted to him.+ This was Li's "cherishing the people with benevolence and kindliness" and "acting with modesty and consideration toward subordinates." When this was related to his reproach and abuse of the captains of the peasant revolution, how clearly this revisionist's love and hatred should stand out!

In Huchou, Li Hsiu-ch'eng's class capitulationism was also quite manifest. Chao Ching-hsien, chief of the Huchou Guard Detachment, was a dyed-in-the-wool counter-revolutionary element. Huchou was under siege by T'an Shao-kuang's forces for as long as six months, yet Chao put up a stiff resistance to the last. When the siege began, Li sent a message to Chao asking him to surrender. But Chao was defiant and had the messenger killed. For this he was commended by the Ch'ing government and rewarded with promotion. Li, however, declared he "longed to meet"++ this sworn

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* "Musical Notes on Lihu", Materials of Modern History, No. 34, p. 169

** "Teng Kuang-ming's Directives," Ibid., p. 5.

\+ "Li Hsiu-ch'eng Approves Hsü Shao-ch'ü's Petitions," Ibid., p. 2.

++ "Brief Account of the Incident in Huchou," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, Vol. VI, p. 749.

enemy of the peasant revolution. After Chao was captured and "while drunk abused" Li, the latter "was not offended and instead treated his guest with due respect."* Moreover, Li went out of his way to have Chao escorted to Suchou and received him with "deference." What an ugly performance! After Li left Suchou, T'an Shao-kuang promptly put Chao in jail. However, Chao did not change his wolfish nature, and conspired with the Ch'ing army in an attempt to take Suchou with outside aid and turn the city over to the enemy. People could not help asking: Why did Li treat a reactionary arch landlord in such a way? Out of strategic consideration? Certainly not! Mercy to the enemy means cruelty to the people, and no amount of fine rhetoric can cover up Li's betrayal of the peasant revolutionary line.

In Shihmen, which was under the rule of Li Hsiu-ch'eng's capitulationist line, the renegade Teng Kuang-ming launched a counter-attack in revenge on the revolutionary army and civilians and restored the power of the overthrown landlord class. Shen Ch'ing-yü, a big landlord in Chekiang's Shihmen, was related to an illustrious family and had close contacts with officialdom. After the T'ai-p'ing army seized Shihmen, the landlords were stripped of their powers and the peasant masses were jubilant. Along with the peasants, the officers and men of the T'ai-p'ing army struggled against Shen while the tenant farmers refused to pay rent and other levies. For more than two years, he had to "lie low,"** all his former arrogance having been deflated. Although by instinct he hated the revolution, he had to "suppress his anger and does not dare to speak out." This was a normal revolutionary order. However, Teng Kuang-ming, Li's trusted lieutenant assigned to Shihmen, was quite dissatisfied with the prevailing revolutionary order and never for a moment did he stop thinking of getting rid of it. In October 1861 he issued Shen a certificate "guaranteeing his property from being infringed upon." Shen used this "proof" to revive his oppression and exploitation of the peasants. If he met any resistance, he would boldly take actions to "sue" those who dared to defy him, and he was sure to have Teng's firm backing.*** Since then, Shen and other big landlords "frequently called on"** Teng and presented him with gifts. In this way Teng could realize his pet scheme of making "the rich and the poor live in peace with each other,"*** the typical rhetoric

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* "The Diary on Avoiding the Bandits," Short Course of Historical Materials of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo (hereunder "Short Course"), Vol IV, p. 252.

** "Instructions from Li Hsiu-ch'eng to Shen Ch'ing-yü," carried in Lo Erh-kang, Cultural Relics and Illustrations of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, p. 197.

*** "Teng Kuang-ming Issues a Certificate to Shen Ch'ing-yü of Shihmen County, Chekiang," Ibid., p. 195.

of the capitulationists. Since between the landlord class and the peasantry there has been nothing but antagonism and struggle, "peaceful co-existence," to put it bluntly, was aimed at condemning the poor peasants to perpetual oppression and exploitation and to deprive them of the right to rebel and rise in revolution. It embodied the reactionary thesis of regarding "exploitation" and "oppression" as "justified," a slogan preached through the ages by the landlord class as a deceptive means to govern the country. This reactionary thesis was preached by both Confucius and Mencius. Confucius said, "Those who know how to use things with restraint cherish the people and use them wisely" and "the poor should be made to live happily, and the rich to observe propriety." Mencius said, "Without men of virtue, country men who till the land cannot be governed; without countrymen who till the land, men of virtue would be denied the means of subsistence." The social system of "peaceful co-existence between the rich and the poor" pursued by Teng was in fact the reactionary "old system" of the landlords exploiting the peasants in feudal society. Since the peasants must submit themselves peacefully to the landlord class' political oppression and economic exploitation, wouldn't it be "a crime" and "unjustified" for the T'ai-p'ing peasant insurgents to rise in revolution and to rebel?

The written pledge issued by Teng Kuang-ming provides us with a fine teaching material by negative example. This document tells us that those revisionists who betrayed the peasant revolution would invariably return to the fold of the landlord class and become the latter's submissive lackeys. Their class capitulationist line placed them on the side opposite to the revolution, on the same bench with the enemies of the revolution. The basic idea of the document in repudiating and opposing revolution was no different from the vilification of the T'ai-p'ing peasant revolution, as revealed in Li's confession, as "trouble makers" and "empire wreckers." This explains why renegades like Teng and Li, who were rooted in this basic ideological pattern, defected to the enemy one after another.

Under the sway of Li Hsiu-ch'eng's political line of class capitulationism, big landlords like Hsü Shao-ch'ü could obtain official appointments and promotions once they changed their tactics, with the prospect of joining the T'ai-p'ing local government. A stubborn ring-leader like Chao Ching-hsien was treated with deference in an attempt to win him over, while a rich man like Shen Ch'ing-yü, who had already been struck down in the peasant revolution, was restored so he could ride roughshod over the peasants. In the Suchou area, which was under Li Hsiu-ch'eng's direct control, there were instances in which the elderly villagers "were appointed rural officials"* and the gentry asked to "attend to civil

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* "Notes on Recruitment in Sutai," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, Vol. V, p. 275.

affairs."* The generals holding Wuhsi and Chinkuei openly "produced official notices on recruitment of local officials."** Another general guarding T'unghsiang ruled that "all Ch'ing officials will be registered for recruitment."+ A village despot in Chinkuei county named Hua I-lung, who "defied the long hair's supervision," was asked to "fill the position of a senior rural official."++ "What is restoration? It means that state power falls into the hands of the political representatives of the old system." (Lenin, "The Agrarian Program of the First Revolution of the Social Democratic Party in Russia 1905-1907") Right in his own domain, Li Hsiu-ch'eng allowed the political representatives of the landlord class to hold power in many of T'ai-p'ing grassroots governments. Naturally, this form of political structure could only uphold the interests of the landlord class and restore its "old system." It would never safeguard the interests of the peasant class or build a "new world of new persons" and fight for an ideal society of the revolutionary peasants.

This actually was what happened.

"The Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom" promulgated in Nanking in 1853 (re-promulgated in T'ienching in 1860) served as a basic document of the T'ai-p'ing peasant revolution movement in the political and economic aspects. This reflected the basic demands of the Chinese peasants in regard to the land, probably the best political ideal that could come out of the peasant revolution in modern China before the advent of the Chinese Communist Party. Of course, due to the utopian nature of this program, difficulties were encountered at the time of its implementation, "making it necessary to retreat to within the confines of conditions available at the time." (Engels, "The Peasant War in Germany") This forced them to recognize reality and adopt the old policy of "grain levy and tax," which in effect permitted the landlords to collect rents. This resulted from the fact that the peasant revolution at that time was not led by an advanced class. However, in implementing the established tax policy, the struggle between the two lines still existed. The peasant revolution not only in principle disclaimed the landlord's land ownership, but in revolutionary practice vigorously pounded at this system. In the latter phase of the T'ai-p'ing the situation in Kiangsu and Chekiang remained

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* "Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Admonition to the People of the Su Prefecture," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, Vol. II, p. 724.

** "Brief Records of Quelling Banditry," Short Course, Vol. I, p. 276.

\+ "The Diary on Avoiding Bandits," op. cit., p. 73.

++ "Ch'iuwen Diary," op. cit., p. 113.

the same. Whenever the T'ai-p'ing army went, the poor tenant farmers who through the ages had been at the lowest social stratum rose and came forward to serve as the "vanguard" of the T'ai-p'ing army, killing the officials and putting down the resistance of the landlord class. In a number of localities swept by revolutionary fervor, the peasants took the initiative to seize the land and paid taxes only to the T'ai-p'ing government, and no rent to the landlords. Although in some localities the landlords continued to collect rent they were resisted by the tenant farmers. It was these poor peasants and their resistance and struggles that provided the T'ai-p'ing army with the main source of strength for defeating the Ch'ing troops. If the principle and spirit of disclaiming the landlords' land ownership as embodied in the "Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom" were observed, and if the interests of the peasant masses were upheld and the struggle of the poor tenant farmers against paying rent (or for reducing rent paid) to the landlords was supported, then the T'ai-p'ing would obtain the hearty support of the vast masses of the peasants and this massive support in manpower and material resources would enable the T'ai-p'ing army to win the revolutionary war. On the contrary, if the fundamental interests of the poor tenant farmers were overlooked and if the landlords' exploitation and oppression of the tenant farmers was abetted, then this would run counter to the basic spirit of the "Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom" and bring about and aggravate the antagonism between the T'ai-p'ing and the peasantry. This would result in the T'ai-p'ing losing popular support and hastening the collapse of the peasant revolution movement. Therefore, whether to support the peasants' struggle against paying rent to the despotic landlords or back the landlords' exploitation and oppression of the peasants was a vital aspect of the struggle between the two classes and two lines within the T'ai-p'ing.

In areas under his jurisdiction, Li Hsiu-ch'eng pursued the revisionist line of "following the old system" and did everything he could to uphold the feudal system of land ownership and maintain the interests of the landlord class in contravention of the principle and spirit of the "Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom." In Wu county, Ch'angchou, Yüanho, Ch'angshu, Chaowen, Wuhsi, Chinkuei, T'unghsiang and Shihmen, he not only issued to landlords certificates which legally and formally affirmed the landlord's land ownership, but also set up official or semi-official rent collection bureaus under the sponsorship of the T'ai-p'ing authorities or following consultations with the local gentry. This was designed to safeguard the landlord's right to collect rent and to revive and intensify the old feudal order permitting the landlord to exploit the peasant. This development was non-existent prior to 1860, this being a product of Li's espousal of the revisionist line. The leadership of these rent collection bureaus, administered by rural officials, was entirely in the hands of the landlord class. After the landlords had lists of their land holdings and the number of tenant farmers "delivered to the bureaus," they were issued "rent collection coupons" and they could "collect rent by producing these coupons."* In some localities (such as Chiashan), all the

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* See also Lo Erh-kang, Cultural Relics and Illustrations of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, pp. 179, 189. See also "Kengshen Diary on Avoiding Disasters," Short Course, Vol. IV, p. 514.

landlords were required to do was to have the rent receipts chopped by the bureaus and then the tenant farmers must pay their rent direct to the landlords.* Failure to comply with this ruling, as was the case in Ch'angchou, the defiant tenant farmer would then be taken to the bureau to be dealt with accordingly.** This shows that paying of rent was enforced under compulsion and the rent collection bureau in this case enforced this measure. In Wuhsi and Chinkuei, for instance, "stubborn tenant farmers who resisted rent collection were pursued, caught and detained,"*** indicating that here the T'ai-p'ing government was siding with the landlord class and becoming opposed to the peasantry. Thus the rent collection bureau became a weapon with which the landlord class under the conditions which existed at that time fought against the tenant farmers. With government protection, the landlords were therefore able to collect rent in the form of rice. Although in some places only half the rent could be collected it was still better than none at all. The landlords were satisfied, for with official protection they were no longer helpless when the tenant farmers tried to resist rent collection.

Where there is oppression there is resistance, and exploitation begets struggle against exploitation. Therefore, the vast masses of peasants did not cease their struggles against rent collection attempts by despotic landlords because of government support in Kiangsu and Fukien provinces or other grassroots levels. The greater the oppression the fiercer the resistance. Instead of extinguishing the fury of popular resistance, the revisionist line only aroused the masses of the people to carry out more resolute struggles. This was the case in Ch'angshu where the landlords cried in alarm: "The people's sentiment everywhere has changed abruptly and even the long hair are helpless in doing anything about it."+ The landlords therefore had to reduce the rent. The grassroots cadres of the T'ai-p'ing army, however, continued to have faith in the peasant revolution despite Li Hsiu-ch'eng's practice of capitulationism. Some of them "let the tenant farmers make trouble" while others "proposed exemption of rent"++ in support of the peasants' struggles. This testified to the truth that "capitulationists cannot have the support of the masses." (Chairman Mao, "Interview with the British Journalist James Bertram") The grassroots cadres of the T'ai-p'ing army and the peasant masses would certainly rise to oppose the capitulationists' revisionist line. A large amount of materials

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* "Chao's Diary," quoted from Lo Erh-kung, An Inquiry into Historical Events of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, p. 215.

** "Huang X-x's Notice," Material of Modern History, No. 34, p. 3; "The Tzu-I Diary," Short Course, Vol. IV, p. 468: "The bureau is entrusted to collect rent arrears from those who stubbornly refuse to pay up."

*** "Brief Account of Suppressing Banditry," Short Course, Vol. I, p. 276.

\+ "Kengshen Diary on Avoiding Disasters," op. cit., p. 515.

++ "The Tzu-I Diary," op. cit., pp. 390, 393.

prove that the peasant struggles spread everywhere in rapid succession and culminated, to the consternation of the landlord class, in the use of violent means to smash the rent collection bureaus. Local T'ai-p'ing governments in Kiangsu and Fukien hurriedly proclaimed stern actions against those who tried to resist payment of rent, not excluding "execution."* These government notices in effect turned the spearhead of struggle at the tenant farmers in the Kiangsu and Chekiang countryside, the poor peasants who had been severely oppressed and exploited by the landlord class. What a hideous gesture displayed by the landlord class!

In Ch'angshu, Chaowen, Wuhsi and Chinkuei areas, there were serious and, in some cases, bloody incidents involving open suppression by T'ai-p'ing officers of peasant struggles against paying rent. In May 1861, the peasants in Ch'angshu stormed the rent collection bureau, killed a responsible member of the bureau, and demanded return of rent in kind. They almost burned down the bureau when Ch'ien Kuei-jen hurriedly "dispatched the long hair to the bureau and stopped the natives from giving vent to their wrath."** In June Chien ordered the Ch'angshu garrison to put down the peasants who refused to pay rent to the army collectors.+ In December, the peasants rioted against increased rent in kind, burning down army barracks and killing the military officers in Chaowen. Thereupon, Ch'en ordered the troops to put down peasant resistance."++ In one of the farmsteads near Wuhsi, a tenant farmer named Ku led the multitude to resist paying rent, forcing the landlords to seek redress in the city. The army defenders of Wuhsi and Chinkuei at once complied with the landlords' request and in January 1862 "sent rural officials to the village to suppress" the brave struggle against rent collection. +++ This brutal fact practically amounted to a re-enactment of the counter-revolutionary incident described in Water Margin, in which "Sung Chiang after he surrenders sets out to fight Fang La." Although people like Ch'ien Kuei-jen came close to plotting defection and surrender, they had altered the nature of the T'ai-p'ing regime against the wishes of the suppressed peasants.

The open defiance of people like Ch'ien Kuei-jen in their wanton suppression of the popular struggle against the landlord class was naturally rooted in Li Hsiu-ch'eng, chieftain of the revisionist line. From a "notice," we came upon this relationship between them.

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* "Huang X-x's Diary," op. cit., p. 2; "Ma Ping-hsing's Notice," Lo Erh-kung, Cultural Relics and Illustrations of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, p. 194. "The Tzu-I Diary," op. cit., pp. 390, 415.

** "The Tzu-I Diary," op. cit., p. 397.

\+ "Records of Disturbances by Bandits from the Sea," op. cit., p. 371.

++ "The Tzu-I Diary," op. cit., p. 418.

+++ "Brief Account of Suppressing Bandits," op. cit., p. 281.

The notice was made public on October 29, 1862 by a certain Huang in charge of military and civilian affairs in Ch'angchou. It clearly revealed Li Hsiu-ch'eng, representing the interests of the landlord class, as the chief culprit in putting down the tenant farmers' struggle against paying rent to the landlords. After analyzing the unsatisfactory state of rent collection in the previous year since the establishment of the rent collection bureau, the "notice" attributed this to "the ingratitude of the tenant farmers .... to the King of Loyalty's true feelings for the people." The notice urged officials to "suppress" the defiant tenant farmers without mercy and declared that only this would conform to Li's "true feelings for the people."* As a teacher by negative example, Li was clearcut and firm in expressing his capitulationist stand. No wonder the jubilant landlords arrogantly cheered "the authority of the long hair who personally see to it that rent in kind is paid in full."** Facts show that Li had completely betrayed the interests of the peasantry and had degenerated into an agent of the landlord class within the revolutionary regime. He pursued the nakedly counter-revolutionary policy of bloody suppression, without even bothering to keep his deceptive mask. When the revisionists betray the interests of the people and suppress the defiant people, they will eventually reveal themselves as the enemies of the people. This is determined by their class character. This is because they are termites inside the revolution, the political detachment of the landlord and bourgeois classes. There are no exceptions to this rule in ancient and modern times, in China or elsewhere.

(III)

The great revolutionary teacher Lenin pointed out: "Opportunism is not an accidental phenomenon made up of the sins, mistakes and defection of individuals; rather, it is the social product of an entire historical era." (Lenin, "The Bankruptcy of the Second International") The generation of revisionism and the capitulationists cannot be explained by transitory phenomena or the personality of individuals, least of all in terms of the limitations of the peasant revolution, for they are the products of the violent class struggle in society as a whole. Whether to establish the revolutionary dictatorship of the peasants or to maintain the counter-revolutionary dictatorship of the landlord class -- this was in the main a basic aspect of the violent battle between the peasant class represented by the T'ai-p'ing and the landlord class represented by the Ch'ing government. Faced with the fierce class struggle, Li Hsiu-ch'eng yielded to the military suppression by the Ch'ing government and was eroded by the dominant philosophy of that time, the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. It became inevitable that he revised the line of the peasant revolution and practiced capitulationism in a big way.

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* "Huang X-x's Notice," op. cit., p. 2.

** "Chao's Diary," quoted from Lo Erh-kung, An Inquiry into Historical Events of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, p. 215.

"All oppressing classes, in order to maintain their rule, require two types of social functions: one is the function of the hangman and the other the function of the priest." (Ibid.) Combining the function of the hangman and that of the priest, that is, "tempering suppression with appeasement," is aimed at effectively putting down the people's revolution. Beginning with the Chint'ien Uprising, the Ch'ing government had not stopped military suppression of the T'ai-p'ing peasant revolution. Supplementing suppression, the Ch'ing government promulgated in July 1862 an imperial pacification edict which was pasted up throughout Kiangsu and Chekiang provinces. Tseng Kuo-fan drafted a special message to be delivered to Li Hsiu-ch'eng, declaring that "all those who surrender will be allowed to survive."* How to deal with the ruling class' approach to "tempering suppression with appeasement" was an acid test for a revolutionary. Li was not a true revolutionary and he was apprehensive of the Ch'ing government's encirclement and suppression campaign. He was particularly afraid of the Hunan army led by Tseng Kuo-fan. As early as 1860, he was imbued with defeatist and pessimistic sentiment when he repeatedly referred to the Hunan army's "invincibility" and "formidable power."** When later he led his men to Wuch'ang, he hesitated to march into the city and when Anch'ing was in danger he refused to send reinforcement there. This demonstration of his fear of the enemy's "suppression" naturally influenced him to aspire to the enemy's "appeasement."

Submitting to military suppression by the landlord class state was more than anything else behind Li's practice of revisionism. Another important factor was the attempt of the landlord class operating within the Kiangsu-Chekiang base areas to besiege and corrupt Li. He rose from the ranks to become a commander but his understanding of the peasant revolution had not correspondingly risen to a higher stage. The landlord class' economic inducements eroded him while ideological inroads quickened the process of his degeneration. Hsü Shao-ch'ü once presented him with 60,000 taels of silver and was awarded a title. Later, Ch'ien Kuei-jen gave him a pair of gold lions and this gift pleased him immensely. He began to lead a decadent life. What is particularly noteworthy is that the landlord class in the Suchou-Ch'angshu area never stopped praising him. This chorus of compliements enveloped him until he drifted farther from the road of the T'ai-p'ing peasant revolution.

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* "Shanghai Hsin-pao."

** "Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Confession," photostat copy.

Brief Record of Loyal Acts mentioned a stone arch erected by the landlord class in Suchou as a tribute to Li.* Similarly, the landlords in Ch'angshu erected an arch in recognition of Li's "long list of meritorious services."** Some people regarded this as a monument to Li's achievements. In reality, this serves as an iron-clad proof of Li's adherence to capitulationism. It should be made clear that Li's "true feelings for the people" did not include the tenant farmers he had suppressed and that those who praised him were none other than the landlords, gentry and officials. When a peasant revolution leader was extolled to the skies by the landlord class, what he had done must have conformed to the needs of the landlords. This flagrant humiliation is not something one should be proud of, and is something any true revolutionary will resolutely oppose. Li's capitulationist conduct once infuriated Ch'en Yü-ch'eng. He condemned Li's line of "benevolence" as "a perversion of the principle of righteousness"*** at a time when the class struggle was becoming very acute and when the situation between the enemy and ourselves was getting tense. Li, however, was flattered by the landlord class' expressions of gratitude and found its version of "appeasement" totally acceptable.

The doctrines of Confucius and Mencius formed the ideological source of Li Hsiu-ch'eng's practice of revisionism. In his childhood Li was immersed in the teachings of Confucius and Mencius. After he joined the peasant revolution he secretly read the banned books by Confucius and Mencius. When he accompanied Shih Ta-k'ai to Anhwei on an "inspection tour" in 1853, he learned quite a number of things from the landlord class and this "endeared" him to Shih.+ His "following the old system" was no different from Shih's "reviving the ancient practice."++ No wonder he was full of praise for Shih. Even when he was dying, he spoke approvingly of Shih and said Shih "is versed

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* Ch'en Tan-jan, Brief Record of Loyal Acts, Vol. XV. Originally known as Records of Acts of Loyalty and Justice in Kiangsu and Chekiang, it was a book in praise of local officials who "died in the line of duty" while suppressing the T'ai-p'ing peasant revolution in Kiangsu and Chekiang. It was written on order of Tseng Kuo-fan in 1860 and first published in 1892. Later, in 1896 it was changed to "Records of Loyal Acts" by Ch'en and re-published in Ch'angsha in 1902.

** "Inscription to the Monument in Ch'angshu," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, Vol. II, p. 887.

*** Ch'en Tan-jan, op. cit., Vol. XVI.

\+ "Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Confession," photostat copy.

++ "Poems by Shih Ta-k'ai and Others on I-shan," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, Vol. II, p. 883

in stratagems,"* while viciously attacking Hung Hsiu-ch'üan and other revolutionary leaders. To Li, Shih the secessionist was first and foremost a hero. After Shih quit the revolution, Li put forward a whole set of the reactionary line geared to restoring the old order, using the Confucian preaching of "government by virtue" and "restrain oneself and return to propriety" as the basis. When he was conferred the title King of Loyalty /Chung Wang/, he displayed in his official residence large silk banners bearing "the maxims taken from the Confucian Classics."** He paid no attention to Hung Jen-kan's published works with Hung Hsiu-ch'üan's comments.+ In areas under his jurisdiction, some people even extracted passages from the Four Books as test questions in examinations qualifying candidates for official appointments. These people also rebuilt Confucian temples that had been burned down and restored to good condition the damaged portraits of the sage. Li's confession exposed his deep obsession with the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. We also found that at crucial junctures he never abandoned the teachings of loyalty, filial piety, benevolence and righteousness and always turned to "restrain oneself and return to propriety." He praised Tseng Kuo-fan for his "benevolence and love" and attacked Hung Hsiu-ch'üan for his "neglect of government by virtue." He believed in the mandate of Heaven and vilified the failure of the T'ai-p'ing peasant revolution as "preordained by Heaven." His confession abounded in ideas derived from the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and words used in Confucian preachings. Under the sway of this ideological line, he could not but revise the line of the peasant revolution and waver in his devotion to the cause of the peasant revolution. Hung Hsiu-ch'üan reproached him for "changing his loyalty to treachery."++ This revealed his degeneration. As a matter of fact, since Li Chao-shou advised him to surrender in 1859, he never stopped giving consideration to the possibility of capitulation and defection and to the practical actions he might take. He joined the revolution under duress. Prior to the defection of the eight generals, including Hao Yung-k'uan, assigned to hold Suchou, Li held talks with them and even urged them to defect with his backing. Speaking for himself, Li said: "If I have other options, who will dare to guarantee the surrender of a prominent general like myself?" Lamenting the execution of these eight defectors by order of Li Hung-chang, he

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* "Diary By the Recluse Nengching," Short Course, Vol. III, p. 374.

** Ling Li, An Eye-Witness Account of the T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo Revolution, Vol. I, p. 183

\+ "Record of Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Confession," T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, Vol. II, p. 845.

++ "Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Confession," photostat copy.

said with a sigh: "Because of this, no chieftains thus far dare to surrender."* More than anything else, this revealed his inner self -- harboring the wish to surrender yet fearing that he might be decapitated. In revising the line of the peasant revolution and settling for class capitulationism, he had already taken a decisive step. Once he was taken captive, all thoughts about the T'ai-p'ing peasant revolution quickly vanished from his mind. He regarded his joining the T'ai-p'ing revolution as being similar to "one who rides on the back of a tiger finds it difficult to dismount" -- meaning that "although he has the desire, he lacks the right contact."** When he became a "war criminal," he had no choice but to surrender. The possibility of survival made him "blurt out his desire to save his life."*** Finally he was on his knees before the enemy and became a renegade from the T'ai-p'ing revolution. This marked the end of his life.

In assessing the life of Li Hsiu-ch'eng, one can see that he took the path of a defector from the peasant revolution, the road taken by capitulationists. His eventual defection had its deep class and ideological roots, neither "a slip of the mind" nor a case of "befuddlement of the moment." There was nothing accidental about this development. Although he was brought up in straitened circumstances, he lacked a deep understanding of the peasant revolution. With changes in his status, he gradually lost his good qualities. That he turned against his own class and capitulated to the landlord class was not due to an "anachronism." Even more absurd is it to speak about the so-called "limitations of the peasant revolution." After people like Ch'en Yü-ch'eng, Hung Jen-kan and Lai Wen-kuang -- who lived in the same period, were identified with the same class origin and thrust into the same wartime environment -- failed in their revolutionary and heroic struggles and were captured, they refused to surrender. Fearlessly, they condemned the enemy and did not recoil from the approach of death. Why did Li alone fail to act like them? Because he was a revisionist who turned against the peasant revolution. His practice of revisionism met the political needs of the landlords as they were looking for an agent within the ranks of the peasant revolution. Eventually Li took to the road of a renegade step by step, inevitably the result of his pursuing the revisionist line. All those who practice revisionism are capitulationists, as history testifies.

(IV)

The Soviet revisionist renegade clique expresses great dissatisfaction at the Chinese people's criticism of renegades and capitulationists in the history of peasant revolutions in modern China. Their hack historians lose no time to denounce our criticisms, accusing and vilifying us with relentless vigor. People like Tikhvinskiy and Nikiflov (尼基甫洛夫) have

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* Ibid.

** Ibid.

*** "The Diary of the Recluse Nengching," op. cit., p. 375.

spared no effort to deprecate Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, leader of the peasant revolution, and applaud Li Hsiu-ch'eng as "a remarkable strategist and military leader,"* "an outstanding peasant army commander and leader," and "one of T'ai-p'ing's most prominent leaders."** They attack our assessment of Li as a "hasty and biased judgment" and having Li Hsiu-ch'eng "vilified as a renegade."** Talking rubbish, Iliushekitkin (依留舍契金) declared that "it is totally unjust and wrong to look upon Li Hsiu-ch'eng as a capitulationist and renegade."+ A person named Pileliupskiy (别列留布斯基) recently wrote in the October 1975 issue of Problems of History to make an issue out of the Li Hsiu-ch'eng question and launch rabid attacks on China, on communism and on Mao Tsetung Thought. Lauding Li's strategy of "false surrender," he said: "The inherent character of a peasant revolutionary determined Li Hsiu-ch'eng's attitude after his capture, because he took action precisely according to the general moral code of feudal insurgents."++ He was in fact preaching without reservations that surrender was justified.

Isn't it strange that the Soviet revisionists have lavished praises on Li Hsiu-ch'eng, a renegade from the T'ai-p'ing peasant revolution which erupted in China a century ago? The truth is that Li's defection from the peasant revolution and his pursuit of revisionism and capitulationism touch the right chord among the Soviet revisionists. Apparently, they laud the renegade and revisionism in the history of peasant revolutions in modern China for the purpose of invoking the departed spirits in history to defend their renegade behavior. As sparrows in the same bush, they have to cherish each other. In the person of Li Hsiu-ch'eng, the Soviet revisionists have after all found their revisionist "lineage."

The Soviet revisionist chieftains are the greatest renegades from the revolutionary cause of the proletariat, the chief culprits of modern revisionism and capitulationism. Since they themselves have betrayed the revolution, they look upon all revisionists as their kind, not even forgetting a capitulationist in the peasant revolution more than a century ago. To the Soviet revisionist chieftains, renegades and revisionist ringleaders within the Chinese Communist Party, such as Wang Ming, P'eng Te-huai, Liu Shao-ch'i and Lin Piao, are "friends." They openly declare their readiness to side with this band of renegades and expressed their "profound

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* Tikhvinskiy, China's Modern History, Moscow 1972 edition, p. 180.

** B.H. Nikiflov, "Book Review: China's Modern History," carried in Soviet Modern History magazine, No. 4, 1973.

\+ B. II. Iliushekitkin, The Peasant War of T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo, 1967 Moscow edition, p. 372.

++ See Soviet Problems of History, No. 10, 1975, p. 188.

sympathy" for their downfall. How despicable and wretched they indeed are in urging these renegades to "have their decisive say" so as to usurp supreme Party and state power and follow in the footsteps of the Soviet revisionists in restoring capitalism. Harsh facts of class struggle show that after the fond dreams cherished by Liu Shao-ch'i and Lin Piao and by revisionist chieftains like them to become the "junior emperor" of the Soviet revisionists have been dashed, the Soviet revisionists have neither stopped opposing China and communism nor giving up their attempt to wipe us out. They are still bent on looking for agents within the Chinese Communist Party. The reason why they support the renegades operating inside China and do not hesitate to go to the length of invoking the departed spirit of Li Hsiu-ch'eng is that they seek to alter the Chinese Communist Party's basic line, restore capitalism in China and reduce China to the status of a colony of Soviet revisionist social-imperialism. Pileliupskiy identified Liu Shao-ch'i, Lin Piao and renegades and traitors like them as "true internationalists" and this only reveals the reactionary sentiment and sinister motives of the Soviet revisionist chieftains.

Blissfully indulging in daydreaming, the Soviet revisionists think now that they have restored capitalism in the Soviet Union and exercised bourgeois, fascist dictatorship, all other socialist countries will follow their example. Let us tell you, this is altogether impossible. You have prostrated yourselves before the old tsars, styled yourselves as the "gendarme of the world" in your contention for world hegemony, dispatched troops to many countries to interfere with their internal affairs for purposes of aggression and expansion. Your naval vessels have cruised across the oceans in a show of force to intimidate the Third World countries and bully a number of Second World nations. Calling for "detente" every day and clamoring for "disarmament" every year, you are in reality pouring billions of US dollars into arms expansion and war preparation programs geared to the practice of hegemonism. This has made the Soviet Union the most dangerous source of war in the world today. You think you can do whatever you like and ignore others, and think they are helpless to do anything about you. Let us tell you, this won't work! The proletariat will not go along with you, the people of the world will not give their consent, and the Soviet people will not permit you to run amuck.

To make capitulationists known to all the people, the Chinese people have raised high the Marxist-Leninist banner of criticism. Taking class struggle as the key link and pitilessly repudiating Li Hsiu-ch'eng's capitulationist and renegade behavior is in accord with the needs of the revolutionary cause of the proletariat and there is nothing "unjust" and "erroneous" in this action. On the basis of a large amount of facts and authentic materials, we have proved that Li Hsiu-ch'eng practiced returning to the old order and regression and pursued the revisionist line of turning against the peasant revolution. Is there anything "hasty" and "biased" about this? The Soviet revisionists are the biggest revisionists and renegades in modern times and they are particularly afraid of other people criticizing revisionism. Whenever the Chinese people are engaged in criticizing revisionism and capitulationism, the Soviet revisionist lords will label the Chinese critics "anti-Soviet." This was true when we

criticized Liu Shaoc-h'i and Lin Piao for practicing revisionism during the great proletarian cultural revolution and the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. Even when we criticized Water Margin, a teaching material by negative example, and singled out Sung Chiang for his espousal of revisionism and capitulationism, they also reviled us as "anti-Soviet." You are too sensitive, gentlemen. In equating "revisionism" with the "Soviets" all the time, aren't you hiding something in your mind? If you haven't done anything wrong, why are you so apprehensive of others? Despite your vilifications, criticizing revisionism and capitulationism is the sacred duty devolved upon the Chinese Communists and the people of China, and Marxism-Leninism has provided us with the greatest basis. We will keep criticizing every day, every month and every year until communism triumphs throughout the world. Regarding the "anti-Soviet" label, it is definitely not for us. It is exactly your band of prodigal sons who have betrayed Lenin's great teachings and turned socialist Soviet Union into a capitalist nation. You are the sinners against the socialist Soviet Union founded by Lenin and Stalin! Criticizing and opposing you conforms to the fundamental interests of the people of the world, including the Soviet people. It is an inescapable duty of all revolutionary people.

"The roc wings fanwise, soaring 90,000 li and rousing a raging cyclone." The wheel of history rolls on and the torrent of the people's revolution surges forth. Since revisionists and capitulationists are products of class struggle, the revolutionary people should smash them with class struggle. Li Hsiu-ch'eng's pactice of revisionism failed to stop the triumphant march of the Chinese people, and Liu Shao-ch'i's and Lin Piao's espousal of revisionism caused these two men to have an ignominious ending. Outwardly appearing strong, Soviet revisionist social-imperialism is inwardly weak. It is beset with troubles and finds the going tougher and tougher. Like Li Hsiu-ch'eng and all other revisionists, the Soviet revisionist renegades have been hopelessly and forever pilloried in history. "The plum blossoms happily turn to blankets of snow which not surprisingly freeze all the flies to death." Marxism-Leninism will surely triumph while revisionism will certainly lose. This correct conclusion has been and will be confirmed by history!

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